The flawless eagle of Zeus

Adapted pdf version (scrollable frames) of
the video with the same title, available at

https://archive.org/details/the-flawless-eagle-of-zeus

https://youtu.be/tBLqemNZf0U

OCTUPUS
PMO

Naucratis Painter
Laconian Cup, ca.560 B.C.
Louvre

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Laconian Cup, ca.560 B.C.
Louvre

Interpretative problem:

Zeus with his eagle

or

Prometheus attacked by the eagle of Zeus

?

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Interpretative problem:

Zeus with his eagle

~~or~~

Prometheus attacked by the eagle of Zeus

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Interpretative problem:

Zeus with his eagle

and

Prometheus attacked by the eagle of Zeus

through overlapping and compromise solutions

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Laconian Cup, ca.560 B.C.
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First layer of meaning

Zeus is depicted enthroned on the highest Mount Olympus, near the Sun and the Moon.

The king of the gods is accompanied by his faithful eagle, which flies higher than any other living being.

Naucratis Painter
Laconian Cup, ca.560 B.C.
Louvre

However
(links to the second layer of meaning)

1. the main character seems to be "tied up";

2. his ambiguous, unusual throne resembles jail bars and an execution gallows.

Naucratis Painter
Laconian Cup, ca.560 B.C.
Louvre

(Comparative example) Myson, King Croesus enthroned upon a sacrificial pyre, Athenian amphora, ca.500 B.C.
Louvre

Naucratis Painter
Laconian Cup, ca.560 B.C.
Louvre

Second layer of meaning

Prometheus "enthroned", i.e. bound to the Caucasus Mountains for having tried to usurp the authority and powers of Zeus.

To add to the torment, the eagle attacked Prometheus every day to devour his liver, which would grow back during the night.

Naucratis Painter
Laconian Cup, ca.560 B.C.
Louvre

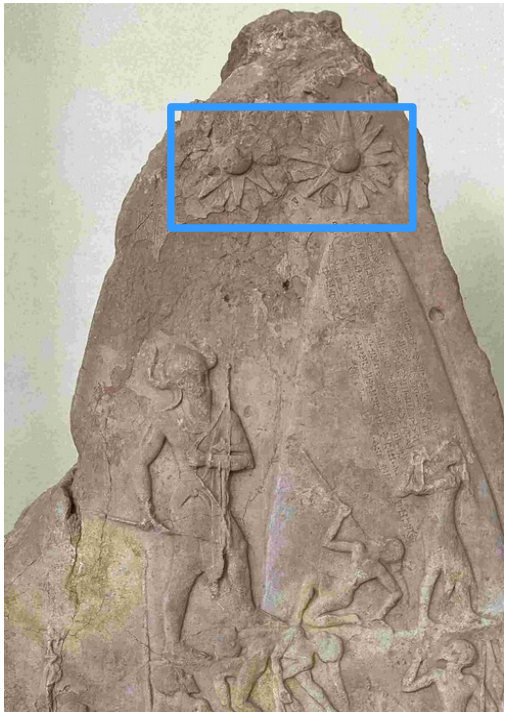
...every day the eagle
attacks Prometheus...

Naucratis Painter
Laconian Cup, ca.560 B.C.
Louvre

and every night returns
to Zeus...

Naucratis Painter
Laconian Cup, ca.560 B.C.
Louvre

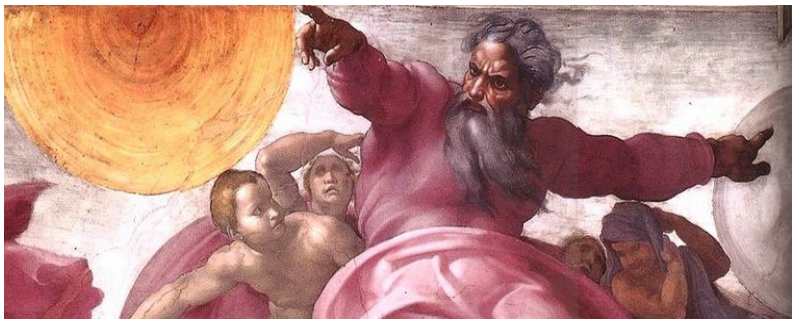
Comparative examples of the two great lights in the sky (Sun and Moon) as symbols of dominion over perpetuity.



Acadian stele of Naram-Sin, det., Louvre

Naucratis Painter
Laconian Cup, ca.560 B.C.
Louvre

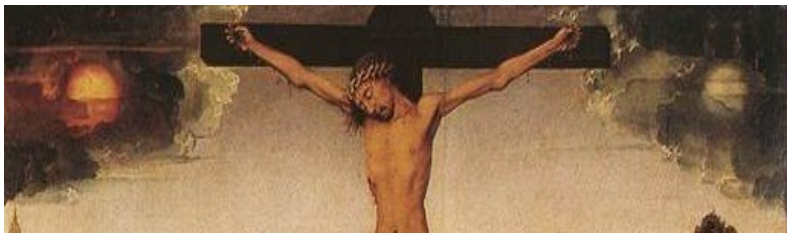
Comparative examples of the two great lights in the sky (Sun and Moon) as symbols of dominion over perpetuity.



Michelangelo, *The creation of the Sun and Moon*, det. Sistine Chapel

Naucratis Painter
Laconian Cup, ca.560 B.C.
Louvre

Comparative examples of the two great lights in the sky (Sun and Moon) as symbols of dominion over perpetuity.



Rogier van der Weyden (workshop),
Sforza Triptych, det,
Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium

Naucratis Painter
Laconian Cup, ca.560 B.C.
Louvre

Thus...

The eagle attacks Prometheus,
The eagle returns to Zeus,
The eagle attacks Prometheus,
The eagle returns to Zeus,
The eagle attacks Prometheus,
The eagle returns to Zeus,
...

Naucratis Painter
Laconian Cup, ca.560 B.C.
Louvre

The visual effect of the piece itself highlights the idea of perpetual rotary motion.

Naucratis Painter
Laconian Cup, ca.560 B.C.
Louvre

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A Couple Waltzing, paper zoopraxiscope disc by Eadweard Muybridge, 1893.

Credits

Narrative mechanism by Naucratis Painter

Analysis and editing by Paulo Martins Oliveira

Sound effects [only in the video version]
- Thunder rumbling, distant crickets chirping, by Walking with microphones
- Thunder Rumbling in Distance, by Laurieme

Images
- Naucratis Painter, Laconian Cup, Louvre (Cp.346; E.668) [commons.wikimedia.org/BibiSaint-Pol]. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Zeus_Naucratis_Painter_Louvre_E668.jpg
- Myson, King Croesus enthroned upon a sacrificial pyre, det., Louvre (N.3407, G.197) [commons.wikimedia.org/Shonagon]. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Amphore_avec_d%C3%A9cors_de_Cr%C3%A9sus_sur_son_b%C3%BBcher_et_de_l%27enl%C3%A8vement_d%27Antiope_-_Myson_-_Mus%C3%A9e_du_Louvre_AGER_LP_1266_;_N_3407_;_G_197.jpg

- Stele of Naram-Sin, det. Louvre (SB.4, AS.6065) [commons.wikimedia.org/Shonagon] https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:St%C3%A8le_de_Naram-Sin_-_Mus%C3%A9e_du_Louvre_Antiquit%C3%A9s_orientales_SB_4_;_AS_6065.jpg
- Michelangelo, *The creation of the Sun and Moon*, det. Sistine Chapel [commons.wikimedia.org] https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Michelangelo,_Creation_of_the_Sun,_Moon,_and_Plants_01.jpg
- Rogier van der Weyden (workshop), *Sforza Triptych*, det., Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium [commons.wikimedia.org] https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rogier_van_der_Weyden_-_Sforza_Triptych.jpg
- Eadweard Muybridge, *A couple waltzing* - the zoopraxiscope [wikipedia.org; commons.wikimedia.org/USLibraryof Congress] https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Phenakistoscope_3g07690u.jpg https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Phenakistoscope_3g07690b.gif

Reference

Paulo Martins OLIVEIRA, *Octógono* n.4 / Jun.2024 – “A Lamentação Feliz de Santa Maria de Belém”, pp.10-12 [academia.edu | archive.org], coll. in *Primeiro Octógono* [academia.edu | archive.org].

[video version June 2026; this pdf version July 2026]